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ABSTRACT

Hiring qualified teachers is one of the most important steps toward providing a good education to students. Because of the large investment of time and money, teacher hiring is one of the costliest administrative duties. Inexperienced and unskilled interviewers can make poor hiring decisions. Research on hiring interviews shows that they are often unstructured, rely on false assumptions, and are inconsistent. Current research on hiring teachers covers four areas: qualities of excellent teachers, structuring interviews, interviewer suggestions, and teacher candidate's perception of the interviewer. Several procedures are recommended for teacher hiring. School or department needs must be assessed to determine which candidate can best meet those needs. Since interviews alone are unreliable, candidates' resumes, miniteaching lessons, and tests should be used. All interviews should be structured with consistent questions asked of all candidates, and answers should be rated on a scale. Interviews should begin with open-ended questions, and questions should focus on the candidate's past experiences. Interviews should be done by panels of three or more people. Candidates should visit classes, students, faculty, and the administration. Ratings scales and interviewing aids are included. (Contains 41 references.) (JPT)

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HIRING EXCELLENT TEACHERS: CURRENT INTERVIEWING THEORIES, TECHNIQUES, AND PRACTICES

PRESENTED BY

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MARCH 11, 1993

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HIRING EXCELLENT TEACHERS:

CURRENT INTERVIEWING THEORIES, TECHNIQUES, AND PRACTICES

INTRODUCTION

> "My wife and I have four children who went through a public school system. From time to time, they complained about their teachers, and I felt our children must be misjudging them. I subsequently found that this was not necessarily the case" (Morris, 1983).

In A Nation at Risk, the National Commission on Excellence in Education called for a new standard of preparation requiring teachers to "meet high educational standards, to demonstrate an aptitude for teaching, and to demonstrate competence in an academic discipline" (Caliendo, 1986). However, according to an exploratory study of employment interview practices, little attention has been paid to recruiting and interviewing in higher education, and even less attention has been paid to interviewing practices in specific academic departments (McDowell and Mrozola, 1987). The fact that faculty are central to the academic mission means that failure to hire good faculty can harm the institution for decades (Coady, 1990). Consequently, it is not surprising that the teacher selection process is one of the most important administrative tasks that can face the educational administrator (Boulton, 1969). The costs and consequences of poor hiring practices can be monumental. The hiring process alone takes enormous amounts of time and can cost thousands of dollars. Hundreds of hours can be spent as academic departments, human resource departments, and members of the administration try to determine criteria for hiring. Then comes the countless hours of wading through resumes and interviewing candidates. Even worse, poor hiring decisions always take its toll first on the students. Faculty are

then eventually terminated, often leading to anger, hostility, and even law suits. Then, this expensive, lengthy process of finding new faculty has to be repeated one year later--often because of poor hiring decisions (Coady, 1990).

So how does an administrator know if a teacher candidate can really teach? How can a teacher selection process realistically measure a candidate's ability to communicate well in the classroom, work well with students, and contribute as a faculty member? What questions should be asked during a necessarily brief interview to identify excellent teachers? What are the current interviewing theories, techniques, and practices that most effectively identify excellent teachers? The answers to these questions are the basis of this research paper.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Compared to previous decades, fewer students during the 1980's have been preparing to become teachers, and those who are studying to become teachers may not be the best candidates for the job. A national study of teaching in 1983, for example, revealed that fewer than 5% of the full-time college freshmen chose teaching as a probable career, as compared to 19% in the 1970's. The reasons associated with the inability to recruit and retain high ability students into teaching were identified as follows:

Low salaries
Little prestige in teaching
Over abundance of experienced, certified teachers
Limited career options
Unattractive working conditions
Low beginning salaries (Englelking, 1987)

Therefore, it has become increasingly more difficult to hire the best candidate because of a smaller applicant pool from which to draw. In addition, resumes do not necessarily give helpful clues

to the candidate's ability to teach and ability to contribute to curriculum development. For example, a listing of courses taught does not indicate that the candidate taught well. Nor does a list of committee memberships mean that the candidate was a valuable contributor to those committees. (Coady, 1990).

In several cases, teacher candidates are selected, based upon inexperienced and often unskilled interviewers. In some cases, teachers are hired on the basis of one interview by one person. Whether or not an interview is meaningful depends upon the skill of the interviewer as well as the personality of the teacher candidate. Also, the interviewers are often administrators who may be out of touch with classroom realities. The result can be decisions based upon personal judgement. In many cases candidates who are articulate, glib, and confident in dealing with adults may appear more capable than less gregarious candidates who may be more effective teachers in the classroom (Morris, 1983). Studies by Engel and Friedrich (1980) have also indicated that interviews are often not valid when the interviewer has had no interviewing training and, instead, just talks to candidates about qualifications. Often, interviews like these gloss over such important teacher qualities as ambition, handling discipline problems, desire to teach, and the ability to effectively work with different-ability students (Engel and Friedrich, 1980).

The most common mistakes made by inexperienced or untrained interviewers include the following:

1. Poorly phrased questions that are not understood by the applicant
2. Purposeless questions that do not yield helpful information about the candidate (failure to have a strategy)
3. Interviewers talking too much so that the candidate is denied enough opportunity to respond to questions
4. Interviewers who react emotionally to the candidate, thus unconsciously biasing their judgement

5. Antagonistic interviewers toward the candidate, inhibiting the candidate from adequately responding
6. Interviewers not following up on revealing candidate responses
7. Interviewer questions that go beyond the limits of proper interrogation
8. Reliance on intuition
9. Overemphasis on initial impression (Engel and Friedrich, 1980)

More recent studies of the problem of one interviewer selecting a teacher candidate reveal that even the best decision-making process can be subject to error. The problem is not so much the candidate's value system as it is the value system of the interviewer making the decision (Nicholson and McInerney, 1988). Various psychological factors influence the evaluation process. One relates to inference theory--the tendency to add things that perhaps aren't there. Inference theory states that we infer the characteristics of candidates on the basis of incomplete information, based on similar candidates from previous situations. The second psychological factor relates to rating theory--the performance of the candidate, the performance of the interviewer, and the interviewer's rating of the candidate's performance. Often, interviewers overemphasize some characteristics and underemphasize others. For example, administrators were found to prize such traits as conformity, willingness to accept judgement of higher authority, attention to details, and simply being a nice person. Such qualities as academic proficiency, creativity, love of learning, patience with learners, and adaptability were sometimes deemphsized (Nicholson and McInerney, 1988). Furthermore, Nicholson and McInerney's studies indicated that appearance, eye contact, gender, and attractiveness influenced the hiring decision (1988).

A study by Niece (1983) also indicated further bias by the interviewer on his/her interviewing decisions. Preferential treatment was given to married candidates, candidates just beginning their careers,

candidates with cocurricular expertise, and to well groomed, physically attractive candidates. In addition, the interviewing process was not standardized, making comparisons among several candidates difficult and more subjective. Also, Niece found that the average interviews lasted less than one hour with the interviewer talking 80% of the time. Often, the interviews were unstructured, featuring yes-no questions, leading questions, and irrelevant questions (Niece, 1983). As one researcher stated: "Often the administrator hires the applicant who seems to reflect his/her own attitudes" (Vornberg and Liles, 1983).

Thus, research has indicated that the interview may not necessarily be the objective and purposeful conversation that would lead to a carefully defined decision for hiring. Rather, the interviewers may typically arrive at their decisions within the first five minutes; the remainder of the interview is then used to gather supportive evidence for the initial impressions and choice. Untrained interviewers who conduct interviews in an inconsistent, unsystematic way yield useless interview results that are low in validity and reliability (Braun, et al., 1990). Furthermore, interviewers who base hiring upon personal judgements risk potential complaints of age, sex, or racial/ethnic discrimination, thus opening school districts up for potential law suits (Loehr, 1986). Therefore, the problem which this research paper will address is how to identify and hire excellent teachers, based on current interviewing theories, techniques, and practices.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Within the discussions of interviewing theory, there are several terms which require basic definition and explanation:

Decision Theory
Impression Theory
Inference Theory
Rating Theory
Personnel Selection
Descriptive Interviewing
Dyad vs. Panel Interviews
Empathetic Listening

DECISION THEORY

The decision-making process is one of the most important and complex behaviors occurring in an organization. It's a process where one is aware of a problem that is reduced to competing alternatives, influenced by information and values. Then, a choice is made, based upon its effect on the overall system (Bredeson, 1985).

IMPRESSION THEORY

Impression theory is based on seven major characteristics, according to S. E. Asch (Social Psychology, 1952):

1. When one forms an impression, it tends to be a complete impression even though the evidence and information may be meager.
2. People do not see characteristics or attributes in other people as separate or distinct entities. Two or more characteristics interact to produce a different impression.
3. All information does not have equal weight when final impressions are created.
4. Each trait or bit of information possesses the property of a part of a whole. The inclusion or omission of a single trait may alter the entire impression.
5. Each quality, attribute, and bit of information is representative of the entire person.
6. If an impression has already been formed and additional infomation or characteristics are presented, the information is seen within the context of the existing impression.

7. The processing of information by a person leads to the discovery of consistencies or contradictions. Inconsistencies prompt us to search more deeply for a view that will resolve the difficulty by A) preserving the existing impression, B) finding explanations for such contradictions, or C) reconsidering the previously existing impression (Bredeson, 1985).

Research on impression formation suggests that people engage in an information-seeking strategy designed to confirm their initial impressions (McDonald and Hakel, 1985).

INFERENCE THEORY

Inference theory is closely related to impression theory. Inference theory means that we infer characteristics of people based upon similar circumstances, behaviors or events we have experienced in previous situations. In other words, inference theory is the tendency to add things that perhaps aren't there (Nicholson and McInerney, 1988).

RATING THEORY

Rating theory attempts to analyze the psychological processes of how an individual evaluates the performance or behavior of another person. Rating theory is developed into a series of mathematical equations which explain rating as 1) performance of the candidate (ratee), 2) the interviewer's (rater) observation of the candidate's performance, and 3) the rater's recall of the observed candidate's performance. Ideally, the goal of rating is to decrease the portion of random error by accounting for various sources of bias that could affect the ratings (Bredeson, 1985).

PERSONNEL SELECTION

Whether formal or informal, selection is based upon the impressions and inferences that administrators make about teacher candidates. Environmental factors, perception and recall factors, and types of selection activities all combine in ratings throughout the total selection process (Bredeson, 1985).

DESCRIPTIVE INTERVIEWING

Descriptive interviewing asks how the candidate has actually behaved in real situations, not how he/she would react in a philosophical or hypothetical situation (Coady, 1990).

DYAD VS. PANEL INTERVIEWS

Dyad interviews consist of the teacher candidate and the interviewer (e.g. an administrator). Panel interviews consist of the teacher candidate and two or more interviewers interviewing the candidate at the same time (e.g. an administrator plus a teacher and subject field expert) (Young, 1983).

EMPATHETIC LISTENING

Empathetic listening is the ability to verbally and nonverbally participate in the spirit or feeling of the interview by appearing to be interested in and concerned with the applicant's contribution to the interview. Consistently associated with empathetic listening are 1) the use of silence/lack of interruptions, 2) probing questions, 3) verbal encouragers, 4) restatements of the candidate's answer, and 5) clarification questions (McComb and Jablin, 1984).

HISTORY OF TOPIC

Theories on perception and selection of teacher candidates indicate that the faculty screening and selection process is complicated, involving perception, assessment, and evaluation of a variety of types of information. S.E. Asch, in his 1952 edition of Social Psychology, summarized his research on the seven major characteristics of "impression formation." This theory suggested that people form a first impression and then engage in an information-seeking strategy designed to confirm their initial impressions. If there are inconsistencies between people's initial impressions and later impressions, they are motivated to search more deeply for a view that will 1) preserve the existing

impression, 2) find explanation for the inconsistency, or 3) reconsider and reevaluate the previous impression (Asch, 1952).

Inference theory research, conducted by Tagiuri (1969), Lewis (1975), Anderson (1976), and Castetta (1976) concluded that "the integration of information about the candidate from all sources is a primary function of the selection process" (Bredeson, 1985). This particular theory states that an interviewer will "infer the. . .characteristics of another person because the circumstances, behavior, or sequence of events are similar to those [the interviewers] have met in previous situations" (Bredeson, 1985).

In 1974, Lipham and Hoeh's research concluded that decision-making (decision theory) was a process, influenced by information and values, that was reduced to competing alternatives where choices had to be made. This led to Lipham's concept of the decision-making process: decision content, decision stages, and decision involvement. Personnel selection then could be viewed as "a continuing series of decisional stages instead of a single event" (Bredeson, 1985).

Rating theory, developed by Wherry and Bartlett (1982), described various means for controlling or removing sources of bias which contaminated human rating responses. Rating theory attempted to analyze the psychological processes of how an individual evaluated the performance or behavior of another person and broke the process down into a series of mathematical equations to decrease bias and random error which could affect the ratings (Wherry and Bartlett, 1982).

Interview research dates back as far as 1911. Benet reported low reliability for interview-based assessments of intelligence collected from three teachers who had evaluated the same five children. Also in 1915, there were low reliability ratings for evaluations given by

six personnel managers who had interviewed the same 36 sale applicants in a business firm. Studies by Wagner (1949) did further research on the reliability and interview judgements and recommended that the interview could be useful in three situations:

1. Where rough screening is needed
2. Where the number of applicants is too small to warrant more expensive procedures
3. Where certain traits may be most accurately assessed by the interviewer (Arvey and Campion, 1982)

Fifteen years later, research by Mayfield (1964) still confirmed the relatively low reliability and validity of employment interviews. Mayfield, however, recommended that research in interviewing should shift to the decision-making process in the interview and to determine what factors were producing or influencing the interview judgements. After extensive research, Mayfield concluded these important statements about decisions based on interviews:

1. General suitability ratings based on unstructured interviews have low reliability.
2. Material is not covered consistently in unstructured interviews.
3. Interviews are likely to weigh the same information differently.
4. Structured interviews result in higher inter-rater reliability.
5. Interview validity is low.
6. If the interviewer has valid test information available, his predictions based on the interview plus test information are usually no better and frequently less valid than the predictions based on the test alone.
7. Interviewers can reliably and validly assess intelligence but have not been shown to be effective in evaluating other traits.
8. The form of the question affects the answers given.
9. The attitude of the interviewer affects the interpretation of the interviewee's responses.
10. In unstructured interviews, interviewers tend to talk most.
11. Interviewers are influenced more by unfavorable than favorable information.
12. Interviewers make their decisions quite early in unstructured interviews (Arvey and Campion, 1982).

In addition, research by Ulrich and Trumbo (1985) confirmed Mayfield's findings, but they also suggested that researchers should examine the information gained from other sources such as employment tests (Arvey and Campion, 1985).

In 1976, Schmitt organized several reviews around specific variables and their impact on decision-making in interviews. For example, he found research by Springbett (1958) that suggested that interviewers reached final decisions typically within the first 4 minutes of the interview. Anderson (1960) found that after interviewers formed a favorable decision, they spent more time talking than listening, perhaps trying to "sell" the candidate on the company. Schmitt suggested that a structured interview would be more reliable because it would force the interviewer to be more attentive. Schmitt reported studies of stereotypes interviewers had of idealized job candidates. Research by Sydiaha (1961), Bolster and Springbett (1961), and Hakel, Hollman, and Dunnette (1970) found that interviewers possessed stereotypes of idealized successful applicants against which real applicants were judged. These stereotypes, consequently, diminished or altered the interviewer's evaluation. Other conclusions of Schmitt made from the research were as follows:

1. Nonverbal sources of information were more important than verbal cues.
2. Interviewers tended to give lower evaluations to female applicants.
3. Experienced interviewers were no more reliable than inexperienced interviewers. Stress to meet quotas, however, influenced the decisions of experienced interviewers more than the decisions of less experienced interviewers (Arvey and Campion, 1985).

In 1979, Richard d. Arvey summarized the research literature on biased interviews. Studies concluded that htere was evidence of bias in the employment interview with regard to blacks, females, the

handicapped, and the elderly. Furthermore, Arvey summarized a study by Cash, Gillen, and Burns (1977) which stated that females were given lower ratings for jobs typically "masculine" in nature, and males were given lower ratings when being interviewed for typically "feminine" jobs. After reviewing the current literature, Arvey recommended the need for further research in methodological problems (studying real interview situations), further research on race, age, and the handicapped, and more process research (how and why decisions are made) (Arvey and Campion, 1985).

For decision-making studies, there have been several studies reporting evidence for rating errors in the interview. In 1975, research by Kopelman found evidence of bias in evaluations of video taped interviews of candidates (1975). In 1979, research by Tucker and Row found that interviewers who first read an unfavorble letter were more likely to give the applicant less credit for past successes and to hold the applicant more personally responsible for past failures. Research by Keenan (1977) suggested that an interviewer's personal feelings influenced their general evaluations of the applicant (Arvey and Campion, 1985).

Research in nonverbal behavior (Amalfituno and Kalt, 1977) revealed the importance of eye contact. Candidates who maintained eye contact, rather than looking down, were more likely to be hired. The perception was that those who maintained eye contact were rated as more alert, assertive, dependable, confident, responsible, and as having more initiative. Other qualities of nonverbal behavior favorably biasing the interviewer were smiling, posture, interpersonal distance, and body orientation. All of these were found to significantly affect the interviewer's impressions and subsequent decisions (Arvey and Campion, 1985).

Lastly, much research has been conducted in identifying elements of good, effective teachers from poor, ineffective ones. In the 1920's, the focus was on personal characteristics. Students were surveyed about qualities they liked about their teachers and who their favorite teachers were. In the 1940's and 1950's, the focus was on the comparison of teaching methods, but there was little agreement on which methods were more effective than others. In the late 1960's, the focus moved to evaluating teacher effectiveness based on student learning and student achievement. This led to the 1970's where teacher effectiveness was based on results of student achievement tests. In the 1980's, the emphasis was on matching the learning style of a student to the teaching style of the teacher (Kelly and Kelly, 1982).

MAJOR ISSUES, CONTROVERSIES, AND CONTRIBUTIONS

Current literature in effectively identifying and hiring teacher candidates through the interviewing process concern four general areas:

1. Qualities of Excellent Teachers
2. Structuring the Interviewing and Hiring Format
3. Suggestions for the Interviewer
4. Teacher Candidate's Perception of the Interviewer

QUALITIES OF EXCELLENT TEACHERS

In a study by Kelly and Kelly (1982), nine professors winning "Outstanding Teacher" awards were analyzed for common qualities for any outstanding teacher. The most frequently found qualities for outstanding teachers included the following:

Enthusiasm for teaching

Love of his/her students

Committment to the students

Respect for the students

Demanding with high expectations for the students

Interest in the student's achievement

Well organized

Command of his/her subject matter

Stamina and vitality

Sense of humor (Kelly and Kelly, 1982)

Studies by Nickolson and McInerney (1988) and Caliendo (1986) concluded that teacher effectiveness also must include the following:

Basic Intelligence

Academic Achievement

Appearance

Emotional Balance

Empathy

Sensitivity to different needs of students and knowledge of teaching them

Listening Skills

Ability to verbalize teaching decisions and to express themselves orally

Familiarity with educational Literature

Ability to write English clearly and correctly

Ability to Teach Effectively (Nicholson and McInerny, 1988; Caliendo, 1986)

In still another important study, teacher candidates were asked to teach a 20-30 minute lesson to students in the classroom after they were interviewed. Ironically, the interviews gave little clue as to the candidate's teaching performance. During the interview, the candidate may have revealed knowledge of the discipline and of pedagogy, but they did not necessarily reveal teaching skill. Some of

the best interviews failed in the classroom due to a total lack of eye contact, a boring monotone voice, or an incoherent delivery. Successful teacher candidates, on the other hand, shared several common characteristics:

1. They learned and used the names of several students in the room before their 20 minutes ended (a sign of liking students).
2. They got students and "outside visitors" interested in the topic being taught (a sign of enthusiasm).
3. Students didn't want to leave due to so many student-generated questions after the 20 minute teaching experience. (Coady, 1990)

As the research indicates, each administrator can have a different perception of what constitutes an excellent teacher. According to the findings of Engel and Friedricks, "Many personnel directors look only for a certain set of traits. They have observed successful employees and they believe their traits are to be emulated by everyone. This can be a mistake." Engel and Friedricks recommend that, prior to scheduling an interview, the interviewer should list the factors that would be most helpful to that particular position (Engel and Friedricks, 1980). Furthermore, the following factors seemed to be most important for candidates in the teaching profession:

Ability to Communicate	Enthusiasm
Cooperation	Social Perception
Educational Background	Goals and Objectives
Stability	Ability to organize oneself
Maturity	Knowledge of Subject
Self-confidence	Ability to Plan
Poise	Ambition
Aggressiveness (Assertiveness)	Moral Standards

(Engel and Friedricks, 1980)

STRUCTURING THE INTERVIEWING AND HIRING FORMAT

After deciding on the qualities of an excellent teacher, the next step is to prepare for the interview. As Webster concludes, "Nationally, the interview process appears to carry the most weight in the selection of teachers" (Webster, 1988). Several studies indicate common steps to follow which eventually lead to the interview of a teacher candidate:

I. Establish Position Objectives

- A. Chairperson and faculty assess needs
- B. Establish position objectives
- C. Develop concensus with faculty
- D. Administration gives input

II. Initial contact with Candidate

- A. Identify potential candidates
- B. Make initial contacts
- C. Complete thorough resume review (letters of recommendation have been cited as key pieces of information for purposes of screening for principals (Bredeson, 1985)

III. Initial Interview with Candidate

- A. Plan for the interview
- B. Plan the number of interviewers to be present
- c. Plan the data to be collected
- D. Have a form to rate all candidates

IV. References Contact

- A. Contact at least two references
- B. Compare with other teacher candidates

V. Evaluation

- A. Evaluate candidate against objectives for the position
- B. Involve faculty in the evaluation process
- C. Develop a consensus of opinion among the evaluators

VI. Campus Visit

A. Develop itinerary for interview visit

B. Appoint faculty hosts/hostesses

C. Provide teacher candidate with a schedule of activities

VII. Decision to Extend Offer

A. Decision group should reconvene to make final decisions

B. Decision is made to hire, reject, or delay

VIII. Employment Offer

A. Offer is made in writing with an acceptance date specified

B. Expect a decision by the acceptance date

C. Be careful of counter offers

IX. Post-Recruiting Activity

A. Inform faculty of acceptance of offer

B. Announce position filled to other applicants

C. Welcome applicant to faculty and place him/her on the mailing list (Morin and Kehoe, 1982)

Researchers Morin and Kehoe further state that sometimes a candidate will accept an offer by the specified date, but raise additional issues in the acceptance letter. This should be recognized as a counter offer. An important point is that if one becomes involved in counter negotiations, the counter made in response to the offer may only be the first state of counters. Consequently, one could get into a position of having an offer outstanding throughout lengthy counter offers, thus blocking other candidates from being offered the job. Morin and Kehoe suggest that, to avoid this, one must expect offers to be accepted or rejected within the specified time frame. The administration should not consider a counter offer until the original offer is either accepted or rejected. If the initial offer is rejected, then the administration can consider whether they want to become involved with the counter offer (Morin and Kehoe, 1982

A variation of this interviewing schedule is suggested by John W. Maguire in which faculty participation in the interviews of candidates can be a tool for enhancing staff development and build cooperative relationships between faculty and administration:

STEP 1: Involve faculty in defining the position to be filled and in establishing specific criteria.

STEP 2: Form a small committee to screen applications. Narrow candidates down to 8 - 10. Of those, the most promising three should be ranked in order of choice.

STEP 3: Begin the interviewing process:

A. Invite the applicant to visit the school for the day. Set up an agenda for visits and interviews.

B. Have various teacher/administrators meet and informally interview the candidates (mini-interviews) during the day (no longer than 15-20 minutes per interview).

C. At the end of the day, the candidate returns to the principal for a final meeting/interview.

D. After the candidate leaves, the selection committee immediately meets and rates the candidate on an objective rating form.

This same process is done for the other two candidates, and the decision is then made. As Maguire suggests, "Teacher involvement develops a higher sense of professionalism, as the process provides for shared decision-making with the school administration. A total school view is emphasized and the cooperation in this endeavor between teachers, counselors, and administrators may have a carry-over value in other aspects of school governance"(Maguire, 1983).

THE INTERVIEW: A TEAM EFFORT

Several studies have suggested a team approach to the interview of a candidate. To eliminate the potential bias of a single interviewer selecting the teacher candidate, interviewing panels have been suggested by several researchers. As Nicholson and McInerney suggest, "Individual principals can't [hire good teachers] alone. It requires a team approach. A team is less likely to miss key aspects of a candidate's personality or potential than is a single interviewer. The team approach also erases the problem of the dominant personality of a single interviewer being the factor in selection" (Nicholson and McInerney, 1988). Also, the panel interviewers know the idiosyncrasies of the community, the educational philosophy of the school, and the desirable attributes to maintain staff balance and skills to teach the required subject/grade level (Engel and Erion, 1984).

The building of collegiality was also noted in a study by Saundra Tracy, Assistant Professor at Cleveland State University: "The selection process brings together faculty members who have been working quite independently in the same department or program but now have an opportunity to chart the department's future decision" (Tracy, 1986). In a study completed by James A. Ross (1991), he also states several advantages to the team interview approach: "A team of at least three--a grade-level classroom teacher, a subject/position specialist, and other appropriate people--interviews each teacher candidate. After meeting with the candidates, the team makes its recommendations to me, and I inform the personnel department....This method has several advantages: It virtually guarantees acceptance of new staff members by their future colleagues; it sets the stage for effective mentoring; it assumes confidence in the professional judgement and insight of current staff members; and it helps everyone stay committed to school goals" (Ross, 1991)

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE INTERVIEWERS

In a study by Braun, Green, Willems, and Brown (1990), teachers were asked about what specific questions they were asked during the interview:

48% reported that administrators expected them to be familiar with specific classroom management programs.

17% reported that administrators expected familiarity with a specific curriculum package/textbook series.

94% were asked about discipline.

76% were asked about human relations

69% were asked about philosophy

66% were asked about curriculum

62% were asked about teaching methods

55% were asked about career plans

47% were asked about subject content

According to studies by Wendel and Breed (1988), most school districts lacked established policies for the selection of teachers or administrators. They further stated that the selection process was an intuitive selection process that relied primarily on an unstructured interview given by an untrained interviewer. It, therefore, had low validity and reliability. If, however, the interview was structured and given by a trained interviewer who focused on measurable factors with scored responses, the interview increased in reliability (Wendel and Bree, 1988).

In a study by Michael w. Jinks, Superintendent of the Ballard Community School District, the greatest causes of weak interviews related to problems with questioning skills and preparation. Sometimes, the interviewer used no list of carefully prepared questions; sometimes the questions had little or no relationship to the teacher duties to be performed; and sometimes the interviewer used no answer guideline to

his/her questions. Jinks concludes five important points:

1. To maintain consistency in evaluations among teacher candidates, the interviewer should ask essentially the same questions of each candidate.
2. To have good questions, the interviewer must analyze the needs for the position.
3. To ask questions about good teaching, the interviewer should consult the teacher evaluation criteria for the school.
4. To determine knowledge of subject matter, the interviewer should consult curriculum guides so that he/she can determine serious discrepancies between how one's own school expects a subject to be taught and how the teacher candidate would approach the subject.
5. The interviewer should research the philosophy of the school and then ask the teacher candidate what his/her philosophy of education is in order to determine potential conflicts (Jinks, 1985).

Furthermore, a study by Jo Roberts (1987) concludes that questions for teacher interviews must focus on discovering not only what the teacher knows <u>about</u> teaching but also on how the teacher <u>applies</u> that knowledge. Good questions, Roberts concludes, ask not only <u>how</u> a candidate would do something but also what the candidate has <u>actually</u> <u>done</u> in a given area. New teachers, incidentally, would offer valid responses based on their student-teacher experiences. Questions must be specific enough to elicit fundamental effective teaching yet broad enough to cover the candidate's philosophy, approach, and growth potential. All questions would be put on a rating scale and weighted, according to the needs of the school and principal (Roberts, 1987).

In further improving the questioning technique, Edison State Community College found that by combining the two modern techniques of descriptive interviewing and teaching simulations, schools could greatly reduce the odds of making a poor hiring decision. In descriptive interviewing, the questions avoid vague philosophical issues and hypothetical problems. Instead, descriptive interviewing asks how the candidate has actually behaved in real situations. For example, typical philosophical questions would be as follows:

What is your philosophy of education?

What is the role of a teacher?

What do you think is a good evaluation system?

In contrast, the descriptive questions would be as follows:

Would you please describe the evaluation system you used in the most recent course you taught?

Was the system normative or criterion based?

What kinds of tests and exercises did you assign?

How much weight did each test/exercise carry?

Through the answers to these questions, the interviewer would know how the candidate values writing, higher level thinking skills, classroom participation, etc. A philosophical question "How do you think a faculty member should develop a new course?" could be converted into descriptive questioning in the following manner:

Describe for us the most recent course that you developed. What was the course? When did you develop it? What process did you use to define the objectives? How did assignments fulfill the objectives? How did you evaluate whether the design was successful?

By asking descriptive questions, therefore, you know what the candidate thought important to actually do. Abstract questions do not address

this necessarily. The one drawback, however, is that the most informative, revealing interview does not necessarily guarantee a good teacher. By including teaching simulations (mini teaching sessions), however, we can actually see how a candidate relates with students and how coherently he/she can deliver information and stimulate thinking (Coady, 1990).

Further findings by Coleen Armstrong (1988), teacher at Hamilton High School, Hamilton, Ohio, support Coady's findings. Armstrong also suggests putting prospective teacher candidates on the spot by asking specific questions that force them to tell the interviewer how they have performed in the past. Here are some sample questions:

1. "Describe a lesson plan during your career that went extremely well." (Good teachers are creative and use unusual, imaginative approaches to keep students interested in learning.)

2. "Tell me about a time when you helped someone achieve success." (A good teacher is caring, concerned, and dedicated.)

3. "Tell me about a time when a student or class taught you something." (The best teachers recognize that learning is continuous and mutual.)

4. "Tell me about a situation that you realize now you probably mishandled (Good teachers learn from their mistakes and move on.)

5. "Describe your own most memorable teacher." (Any good teacher has a special role model.)

6. "What would you like to know about our school?" (Dedicated teachers want to offer their talents to a school they consider first-rate.)

Cynthia Martin, counselor in San Antonio Independent School District, added an additional one to the six above: "Describe yourself." The interviewer would then look for enthusiasm, warmth, caring, emotional maturity, leadership skills, and a willingness to learn (Martin, 1993).

TEACHER CANDIDATE'S PERCEPTION OF THE INTERVIEWER

One important fact often overlooked is that to attract the best teachers, the teacher candidates have to be impressed equally with the school, teachers, administration, and students to which he/she is applying. Research by Engel and Nall (1984) concludes that strong reasons that faculty accept employment include friendliness of administration, discipline salary, the facilities, personal growth, philosophy of the school, competence of the staff, chance to use special skills, friendliness of the staff, and teacher load. It's, therefore, important to use friendly, outgoing, knowledgeable veteran faculty to help with a candidate's initial visit to establish a warm rapport and to answer the candidate's questions about such things as salary, philosophy of the school, teacher load, etc. It's also as important for the interviewers to sell the school as it is for the candidate to sell himself/herself (Engel and Nall, 1984).

SYNTHESIS/ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH AND LITERATURE

Research on effective interviewing techniques for identifying excellent teachers is abundant, especially from the early 1980's to present, in the following areas:

1. The resume's importance to the interview
2. Objective testing of teacher candidates
3. The interviewing team
4. Perceptions of the teacher candidate and the interviewer
5. Types of questions asked during good interviews

THE RESUME'S IMPORTANCE TO THE INTERVIEW

According to research conducted by Braun, Willems, Brown, and Green, "Key items in the credential file are letters of reference and the resume. Impressions formed on the basis of letters of reference were found greatly to influence the final interview decision (Brown, et al., 1987). In another

research study conducted by Braun, Green, Willems, and Brown (1990), teachers in California and Wyoming were asked what was the single most important item in their file. The majority (61%) thought letters of recommendation from cooperating teachers and others who had observed the applicant teach were very important. Letters of recommendation, however, are read and evaluated from different perspectives and with varying interpretations. For example, literature abounds with suggestions that the letter of recommendation as a selection tool can often provide candidate information that is irrelevant and incorrect, sexist, discriminatory, and distorted. Yet despite these criticisms, letters of recommendation continue to be highly valued by decision-makers in selecting personnel (Bredeson, 1985).

Furthermore, research on the academic resume indicates that there is little agreement about the most important factors in determining which candidate to interview. In one study, the number of publications, work experiences, and papers were perceived most important. In another study, the quality of research, needs of the department, number of publications, and letters of recommendation were the most important factors of the interview. In addition, another study concluded that 34% of the chairpersons chose teaching experience as the most important factor in deciding which candidates to ask to interview (Peirce and Bennett, 1990-91). However, as Bredeson's research concludes, "A more useful interpretation [of the resume] is that since all of the pieces will never be available in terms of candidate information, the decision-maker might think about multiple pieces of reality, which fit the informational voids . . ." (Bredeson, 1985). In other words, the resume should be only one small piece of the overall decision to hire a teacher candidate.

OBJECTIVE TESTING OF TEACHER CANDIDATES

Research on using objective testing as a factor in identifying excellent teachers was conducted by William Webster (1988). Webster and the Dallas Independent School District initiated a teacher selection program designed to upgrade the quality of teachers in the school system. The school district modified its teacher selection procedures to include three new criteria to their traditional criteria:

TRADITIONAL CRITERIA

1. An analysis of the employment application
2. An analysis of the applicant's certification
3. An analysis of the applicant's transcript
4. An evaluation by the applicant's sending principal
5. An evaluation by the applicant's cooperating teacher (if a recent graduate)
6. An evaluation by the applicant's college supervisor (if a recent graduate)
7. Recommendation by a district tri-ethnic screening committee
8. An analysis of the applicant's personal and professional references

NEW CRITERIA

9. A test of verbal and quantitative ability
10. An essay response to a structured questionnaire
11. Verbal response to a structured interview

Prior to November 1977, district policy required the National Teacher Exam scores in selecting prospective teachers. However, because only 25%-35% of the actual applicants had taken the NTE by the time classes began, they adopted the Wesman Personnel Classification Test (WPCT) to administer to candidates prior to the selection of candidates. The WPCT was adopted because there was a high correlation of scores between the NTE and the WPCT. Also, the WPTC took only 28 minutes to administer.

It was assumed that candidates who scored very low on the WPCT would be expected to encounter more than average difficulty in a profession that depends so much on one's ability to communicate. It seemed logical that successful teachers should be minimally competent in acquiring, remembering, and transmitting knowledge. When WPCT scores were added to scores on the essay exercise and the scored interview, interviewers could predict the quality of instruction of each candidate. Research by Webster concluded, however, that WPCT scores were more powerful predictors of classroom performance than were interview scores and essay scores (Webster, 1988).

THE INTERVIEWING TEAM

Research conducted by Braun, Willems, Brown, and Green (1987) sought data about how administrators structured the interview. 72% of all administrators said that they used a specific pool of questions to ask applicants, designed by school officials (54.5%) or by a Perceiver instrument (45.5%). A majority of administrators (76%) expressed interest in seeing a videotape of a teacher candidate's performance. Also, 75% of administrators indicated that they included other staff or community representatives to interview teacher candidates. Other teachers (36.9%), administrators (28.5%), and department heads (27.2%) were listed as typically included in the interviewing process (Braun, et al., 1987). the advantages in allowing various faculty and others on the interviewing team have been noted. Research by Tracy (1986) state the following advantages:

1. Interview teams can thoroughly provide candidates with more information on school programs, departments, and the overall school institution.
2. In discussing criteria for questions, interview teams must reflect on positive qualities as well as weaknesses/needs of the present school and programs.

3. The interviewing team builds collegiality among team members and between the eventually selected teacher candidate. By helping to choose a teacher candidate, team members will be more willing to work with and support new faculty members (Tracy, 1986).

To determine if information obtained from a single person interviewing an applicant was different from information obtained from a panel of interviewers, I. Phillip Young conducted an important research study in 1983. Using a laboratory approach, these two most frequently used interviewing formats--dyad interviews and panel interviews--were investigated. Dyad interviews consisted of two people--a teacher candidate and an administrator. The panel (team) interviews, on the other hand, consisted of a teacher candidate, an administrator, and a faculty member. Young stated that decisions made by groups differed considerably from decisions made by individuals. This finding held true even when the individuals making the decisions separately were the same persons as those who constituted the group. The decisions may not have necessarily been better, however. Also, Young's research cautioned that indiscriminate use of both dyad AND panel interviews for the same job opening would give applicants interviewed by the panel an unfair advantage in the selection process. In order to prevent this, Young suggested guidelines or personnel policies that required uniformity in the interview format (Young, 1983).

PERCEPTIONS OF THE TEACHER CANDIDATE AND INTERVIEWER

Being hired for a job is a complex series of perceptions by both the teacher candidate and the interviewers. Studies by Braun, Green, Willems, and Brown have indicated that interviewers may typically arrive at their decisions within the first five minutes. The remainder of the interview is used to gather supportive evidence for the initial impressions and choice (Braun, et al., 1990)

Research by Peter Loehr has also concluded that the group which interviewed better also performed better in the classroom. Loehr interviewed two groups: group A was comprised of 14 individuals who interviewed consistently well; group B was comprised of 12 individuals who interviewed consistently less well than group A. When both groups taught in the classroom, group A had better attendance, were more involved in voluntary in-service training, more enthusiastic, more ethnically/ racially sensitive, more organized, more loyal, more disciplined, had more control in the classroom, and had greater knowledge of the subject matter than did group B. Group A also had better performance ratings than did Group B. Loehr, therefore, concluded that the interview process had a predictive quality in being able to identify through the interview process applicants more likely to be more effective teachers (Loehr, 1986).

However, whether the interviewer based this perception on an initial impression or not has not been determined. Research findings from McDonald and Hakel (1985) suggested that interviewers did NOT engage in impression confirming information seeking strategies. In McDonald's and Hakel's study, when interviewers had an initial impression of teacher candidates, no strategy was observed where interviewers asked applicants questions which were consistent with their initial impressions. Secondly, the interviewer's ratings of the teacher candidates were based more upon information elicited in the interview than upon the initial impressions. Thus, McDonald and Hakel found that initial impressions played a relatively small part in the final impression of a teacher candidate (McDonald and Hakel, 1985). Therefore, research is inconclusive on how initial interviewer's impression biases the perception of the teacher candidate or not.

As previously discussed, interviewers who use a consistent rating system for all teacher candidates can more accurately compare all candidates. Depending upon the perceived needs of the school, certain components of the rating form will have more value to the interviewers. Research by Bredeson concludes: "Raters in the personnel selection process need to consider a rating system which would give various kinds of applicant information different weights or values, depending on its relationship to and impact on prestated performance expectations. The use of such a system would provide a structured and reliable method of integrating candidate information"(Bredeson, 1985).

As in much research on rating, Morin and Kehoe (1982) rated candidates on meeting a criterion on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 meaning the candidate did not at all meet the criterion and 5 that the candidate completely met the criterion. Then, the importance of each criterion was entered into the analysis. This was accomplished by assigning <u>importance</u> weights to each criterion (for example, 1 to 5,with 5 indicating greatest importance.) The interviewer would then multiply the criterion importance weights by the candidate's score on each criterion to arrive at the total score for the candidate (Morin and Kehoe, 1982).

However, even by using a rating system, consistency of the interviewers' perceptions is not guaranteed in the rating of all candidates. A study by Wexley, Sanders, and Yukl (1973) indicated that 80% of the variance in interviewer's ratings of average candidates could be accounted for by manipulating the quality of the preceding candidates (Young, 1983). Furthermore, another study by Young (1984) cautioned interviewers that certain candidates (<u>r</u> types) are able to estimate the impressions of others and to respond to these impressions.

The result was that administrators perceived r type candidates as being more employable because they were better able to assess and respond to the impressions of administrators. Hence, they ingratiated themselves with administrators and received higher rating scores (Young, 1984).

Conversely, the teacher candidate's perception of the interviewer can also affect the candidate's feelings about the administration, faculty, school, and students, and will ultimately affect the teacher candidate's decision to accept or reject the job offer. This factor can be extremely important in attracting the best teacher candidates to a school where excellent teachers feel good about themselves, their students, the school, and the administration. Research, for example, by McComb and Jablin (1984) indicates that qualities associated with empathetic interviewers have been found to be positively related to applicants' interview attitudes and job offer acceptance decisions: "The process of empathy seems to be the sine qua non for effective communications, especially oral communication." Applicants' perception of their interviewers as "empathetic listeners" were enhanced by their interviewers avoiding the use of interruptive statements. McComb and Jablin concluded that "empathetic listening" can be augmented by interviewers asking probing questions and tolerating non-excessive periods of silence before and after questions were asked (McComb and Jablin, 1984).

Further research by Phillip Young and Heneman (1986) in empathetic listening affirm the findings of McComb and Jablin. Young and Heneman concluded that good interviewers are perceived as having personal warmth and concern for applicants. These perceptions of interviewer's personal warmth have been found to correlate with an applicant's

perceptions of receiving and accepting a job offer. Personal warmth was interpreted by applicants as eye contact, frequent smiling, positive reactions to the applicant's humor, and the interviewer's knowledge of the job opening. Young and Heneman's research also concluded that the personal warmth of the interviewer, the interviewer's knowledge of the job opening information, and the chronological age of the interviewer (applicants in an experiment preferred the 30 year old interviewer rather than the 20 or 50 year old interviewer) all affected the applicant's probabilities of receiving and accepting a job offer (Young and Heneman, 1986).

TYPES OF QUESTIONS ASKED DURING GOOD INTERVIEWS

Research has shown that the majority of administrators (72%) used a specific pool of questions to ask a teacher candidate. Those questions were designed by the administrator (54.5%), the school district, or by a commercially obtained Perceiver instrument (45.5%). Also, administrators were consistent in how they structured the interview. The typical interview was over one hour with specific pools of questions asked of each applicant. Studies indicate that administrators consider honesty of the candidate's responses, interpersonal skills, use of oral English, and personal appearance as heavily weighted in an interview. Secondary administrators were more likely to consider previous work experience and extracurricular activities as important weights during the interview (Braun, Willems, Brown, and Green, 1987).

Research indicates two broad types of questions asked during an interview: open-closed questions and primary-secondary questions. Open questions are broad in nature, allowing the teacher candidate freedom to express his/her thoughts. Closed questions are restrictive in nature, allowing little freedom of responses. Here are some examples:

OPEN QUESTION: What are your career goals?

OPEN QUESTION: What are your areas of strength in the curriculum?

CLOSED QUESTION: What are you presently teaching?

CLOSED QUESTION: Tell me what you consider your greatest strengths?

Primary questions are those that introduce new topics in the interview. Secondary questions are commonly "follow-up" questions to a previous question in order to get more information from the teacher candidate:

PRIMARY QUESTION: Tell me about yourself?

SECONDARY QUESTION: Why are you certain of this? (Martin, 1993)

According to the research, the most common sequencing for questioning is the "funnel sequence." The interviewer begins by asking broad, open-ended questions. As the interviewer progresses, the questions gradually move to more closed-questions. The "funnel sequence" of questioning allows the maximum opportunity for an applicant to talk during the early portions of the interview. Since many interviewers can make tentative decisions about the applicant during the first four to seven minutes of the interview, the sequencing enables the candidate to talk the most during this crucial time (Tengler and Joblin, 1983; Martin, 1993).

In a study by Jo Roberts (1987), questions for teacher interviews focused on discovering not only what the teacher knew about teaching but also on how the teacher <u>applied</u> that knowledge. Good questions ask not only <u>how</u> a candidate would do something but also what the candidate has <u>actually done</u> in a given area. Questions must be specific enough to elicit fundamental effective teaching practices yet broad enough to cover the teacher's philosophy, approach, and growth potential. Questions followed four broad categories:

1. Instructional Concerns (teaching techniques, planning, managing students, and motivating students)
2. Professional Development and Compatibility
3. Professional Relationships
4. Additional Measures (professional ability, teacher qualifying tests)

All questions (see TABLE 1) were weighted according to the needs of the school. In this case, instructional concerns and professional development were the most important needs for this particular school. All candidates were then rated on an evaluation form according to the weights of each question (see TABLE 2). Using this rating chart, candidate's strengths and weaknesses could be easily compared. When comparing candidates, one candidate could be stronger in the general category of instruction while another might possess greater potential for school service, professional development, and contributions. Using consistent pools of questions which are weighted and scored enables schools to make appropriate decisions since they are based on clear categorical comparisons in light of the needs of the school. The decisions are also fair since decisions are based on a comparison of all the candidates' scores (Roberts, 1987).

Thomas P. Kopetskie, Assistant Principal at Area High School, fleetwood, PA, has a more simplified version of interview questions and the rating scale. In this verson, the questions, rating form, and weight of each question can be adapted to the specific needs of each individual school using the form. As in other rating forms, the candidate with the highest score can be more objectively selected as the best teacher candidate (see TABLE 3) (Kopetskie, 1983).

Jinks also uses a rating form which rates responses of each candidate on a 1 to 5 point scale. However, Jinks also objectively

TABLE 1

Teacher Interview Rating Scale

(ROBERTS, 1987)

	Questions	Sample Responses	Possible Points
I. Instructional Knowledge/Abilities			
Teaching Techniques/Learning	1. What is good teaching?	One clear objective, task analysis, active involvement, higher thinking levels, application, ongoing diagnosis, meaning, transfer, retention, reinforcement, learning styles, extensions and correctives, flexibility	10 (2 for each appropriate response)
Planning	2. How do you plan for instruction?	Content analysis, diagnosis, prescription, instruction, evaluation, reteaching, varied strategies	5 → 10
	3. Outline a sample lesson plan for the first day of class (any content).	Mental set, purpose, rationale, review, objective, input, modeling, guided practice, monitoring, independent practice, closure	5 → 10
Managing Students	4. What is your approach to managing students?	Set standards, clear directions, teach all rules, consistency, prevention, strive for business-like behavior	5 → 10
	5. What if _____ happened? (hypothetical situation) How would you handle it?	Judgment, sensitivity, due process, follow-up	5 → 10
Motivating Students	6. What are some ways to motivate students to learn?	Feeling tone, interest, success, knowledge of results, reward, anxiety (raised or lowered)	6 (2 each)
II. Professional Development and Fit with School Needs			
Preparation (note: this area may be scored relative to other interviewees)	7. What is your college/training background for this job?	Credits/training in the specific area of your school's needs (see transcripts, grades)	4 → 6
	8. What additional training do you have that might be helpful?	Flexibility from minor areas of study; potentially useful learnings	2 → 6

TABLE 1 (CONT.)

Teaching experience	9. How many years of teaching experience do you have?	(Each year = 1 point, maximum 6)	6
	10. How many years have you taught at this level?	(Each year = 1 point, maximum 6)	6
Professional Growth and Responsibility	11. How do you pursue professional growth?	Recent involvement as well as future plans for professional growth, expansion/renewal of skills; reflective practice of teaching	3 → 6
	12. How do you demonstrate professional responsibility outside the classroom?	Planning with faculty, working with students, professional organization work, committees; involvement as well as future plans	3 → 6
Compatibility with Philosophy and Goals of the School	13. What is your philosophy, major goal, or approach to teaching?	High expectations of self and students, climate, belief that all can learn, provision for individual needs, pride, self-esteem, enthusiasm	6
Ability/DesireTo Coach Athletics, Sponsor Activities	14. Are you qualified (interested, willing) to coach/sponsor?	(More points if candidate is both qualified and interested, even if not a present need)	6
III. Professional Relationships			
Staff Relationships	15. How do you build good relationships with staff members?	(Look for concrete examples, positive attitudes toward all staff including support personnel, ways to deal with cliques and conflict, individual contributions to professional relationships)	6
Parent and Community Relationships	16. How important is it for the school to communicate with parents? How do you do it? What do you communicate?	(Look for teacher-initiated forms that teacher has actually used: calls, written items, conferences)	3 → 6
	17. "What if" an irate parent calls you about your class?	(Look for willingness to conference, conference skills like active listening)	3 → 6
IV. Additional Measures			
Professional Ability	(According to standard test or profile used by the district)	(Build a scale of possible scores and the range of the candidates)	6

Position _____ School _____

Interviewer(s) _____

Date _____

Candidate	Instruction				Professional Development and Fit with Needs					Relationships		Other	
	Teaching Techniques/ Learning	Planning	Managing Students	Motivating Students	Preparation	Experience	Professional Growth/ Responsibility	Philosophy, Goals	Coaching, Sponsoring	Staff	Parent, Community	Standard District Measure	Total
	10	10	10	6	6	12	6	6	6	6	6	6	90

Interview Matrix for All Candidates

TABLE 2

(ROBERTS, 1987)

Sample Questions—Areas of Compatibility

I. Philosophy of Education
   A. In your opinion, what are the purposes of public education?

II. Age/Grade Level Suitability
   A. What do you see as the main differences between the needs of middle level and high school students?

III. Subject Matter Competence
   A. What would you say are the comparative strengths and weaknesses of the ___ book series?

IV. Discipline and Class Management
   A. Have you found that any one form of disciplinary action is more effective than any other?

V. Lesson Planning Skills
   A. What variety of teaching techniques would you plan to use in the classroom and in what situations?

VI. Flexibility Within Ability Levels
   A. What special talents or abilities are needed to help a slow learner?

VII. Adaptability to Administrative Decisions
   A. What would be your attitude and reaction to an administrative decision with which you do not wholeheartedly agree?

VIII. Expected Relationship with Peers
   A. How do you feel you will go about fitting into an established teaching staff that has had little turnover?

IX. Extracurricular Interests
   A. Which activities would you be willing and able to direct if the opportunity should arise?

X. Plans for Professional Improvement
   A. Where do you hope to be as an educator in approximately 10 years?

Candidate Comparison Sheet

Category	Positive Characteristics	Negative Characteristics
Philosophy of Education		
Age/Grade Level Suitability		
Subject Matter Competence		
Discipline and Class Management		
Lesson Planning Skills		
Flexibility Within Ability Levels		
Adaptability to Administrative Decisions		
Expected Relationship with Peers		
Extracurricular Interests		
Plans for Professional Improvement		

rates the actual job application. This enables interviewers to further differentiate between the various teacher candidates for the available position (see TABLE 4) (Jinks, 1985).

Another popular rating scale is the Perceiver Inventory. Ferrell, Kress, and Croft (1988) identified excellent teachers of gifted children by using the SRI Teacher Perceiver Inventory. This commercially obtained instrument is a structured interview consisting of 60 open-ended, low stress questions which take approximately one hour to administer. The SRI Teacher Perceiver Inventory identifies 12 themes which have identified outstanding teachers in schools: Mission, Empathy, Rapport/Drive (which indicates personal warmth), Individualized Perception, Listening, Investment, Imput Drive, Activation, Innovation (indicating originality and creativity), Gestalt (perfectionism), Objectivity, and Focus (which indicates personal models and goals) (Ferrell, Kress, and Croft, (1988).

Recommendations abound on sample lists of questions to be asked during an interview. Vornberg and Liles (1983) prepared a helpful guide to assist interviewers with questions and guidelines to identify excellent potential teachers (see TABLE 5) (Vornberg and Liles, 1983). Also, for good general-to-specific questions, Ferguson provided a list of 100 questions that could be typically asked of any teacher candidate. All of these questions could easily be adapted to specific teaching fields and needs of individual schools (see TABLE 6) (Ferguson, 1983).

(JINKS, 1985)

Sample A
Interview Summary

Name of candidate _____ Date_____

Application for the position of: _____

Interviewed by: _____

Interview categories—Rate from 1 (low) to 5 (high)

	1-5	Comments
1. Classroom organization and management		
2. Subject knowledge and curriculum skills		
3. Relationship with other staff members and community in last job		
4. Acceptance of school policies and procedures		
5. Oral/written communication skills		
6. Instructional and motivational methods		
7. Maturity and judgment		
8. Enthusiasm and attitude		
9. Attire, appearance, and grooming		
10. Friendliness and humor		
11. Other		

TABLE 4 (CONT.)

(JINKS, 1985)

Sample B
Job Application Summary

Name of candidate _____

Items—Rate from 1 (low) to 5 (high)

	1-5	Comments
1. Application procedures		
2. Credentials: ____ Complete ____ Incomplete		
3. Transcripts		
4. References		
5. Appropriateness of experience		
6. Writing sample		
7. Interview		
8. Other		

TABLE 5
(VORNBERG AND LILES, 1983)

Taking Inventory of Your Interviewing Techniques

	Yes	No
Preparation Before the Interview		
Know the job analysis for the position	____	____
Examine the screening documents prior to the interview	____	____
Prepare/memorize a list of questions to be focused on during the interview	____	____
Execute your plan with no greater formality than in a common business conversation	____	____
Techniques To Help Candidate Relax		
(Nonverbal techniques)		
Extend a friendly greeting	____	____
Be relaxed yourself during the interview	____	____
Show sincere interest in the applicant	____	____
Do not let interruptions interfere with the interview	____	____
(Questioning strategies)		
Tell the applicant that you appreciate his/her interest in your district	____	____
Ask the applicant what he/she has enjoyed most about his/her teaching career	____	____
Ask the applicant how he/she liked his/her previous teaching experience	____	____
Ask the applicant to tell you about his/her last school	____	____
OR		
Ask questions about college experiences	____	____
Ask the applicant why he/she is applying in your district	____	____
Ask the applicant about the most pleasant and the least pleasant aspect of his/her student teaching experience	____	____
OR		
Ask about past teaching experiences; most pleasant and least pleasant	____	____
Techniques To Assist the Applicant To Express Himself or Herself Openly		
(Nonverbal techniques)		
Listen attentively	____	____
(Questioning strategies)		
Ask the applicant what he/she would like to know about your district	____	____
Use open-ended questions that the applicant can expound upon	____	____
Open with easily answered general questions, then use more specific ones	____	____
Ask the applicant his/her philosophy of classroom management	____	____
Ask the applicant what teaching methods he/she used in other positions	____	____
Ask the applicant about his/her professional goals	____	____
Ask about life goals and career goals	____	____
Ask about past teaching experiences in general terms	____	____
Ask about special interests, talents, or hopes	____	____

TABLE 5
(VORNBERG AND LILES, 1983)

Evaluating Teaching Competence	**Yes**	**No**
(Nonverbal techniques)		
Look for that attitude of professional caring and a positive attitude toward children	_____	_____
Attempt to make an objective judgment about the applicant's ability to express himself/herself in a convincing manner	_____	_____
Try to sense the applicant's dedication to children and his/her willingness to work through inflections and nonverbal behavior	_____	_____
Determine if the experiences he/she shares are positive ones	_____	_____
(Questioning strategies)		
Ask how he/she provides for the advanced student, and the average student	_____	_____
Ask the applicant what discipline measures he/she utilizes	_____	_____
Ask questions related to actions rather than mere philosophy	_____	_____
Ask the applicant how he/she handles individual differences	_____	_____
Ask the applicant to tell you about motivational techniques that he/she has found productive	_____	_____
Ask the applicant to explain his/her expectations of classroom atmosphere	_____	_____
Ask the applicant what constitutes a good teacher	_____	_____
Ask specific questions about applicant's teaching skill development area	_____	_____
Ask the applicant what reading methods he/she utilizes	_____	_____
Ask the applicant about positions of responsibility that he/she has held, such as department chairperson, curriculum planner	_____	_____
Ask the applicant what he/she has done to help students to learn better	_____	_____
Evaluating Enthusiasm Toward Teaching as a Profession		
(Nonverbal techniques)		
Look for a genuine liking for people in the applicant	_____	_____
Look for a pleasing personality	_____	_____
Look for a sense of humor in the applicant	_____	_____
Watch the response in the applicant's eyes as he/she describes teaching experience	_____	_____
(Questioning strategies)		
Ask about specific activities he/she uses to make the classes exciting for students	_____	_____
Ask why he/she chose teaching as a profession	_____	_____
Ask the applicant why he/she became a teacher	_____	_____
After the Interview		
Record your evaluation responses immediately following the interview, including specific annotations concerning the candidate	_____	_____

TABLE 6

(FERGUSON, 1983)

Interviewing Teacher Candidates: 100 Questions To Ask

This list can be used as a resource for developing your own set of interview questions.

1. What is your educational preparation? (Cite preparation in content area.)
2. What are your professional experiences?
3. What is the role of the teacher in the classroom?
4. How would you describe your last principal?
5. What was your favorite course in college, and why?
6. What principles do you use to motivate students?
7. Describe effective teaching techniques that result in intended learning.
8. What are your career goals five years from now? Ten years?
9. State a behavioral objective you taught in your last class.
10. What is the most exciting thing happening in the area of education today?
11. What is the most exciting thing happening today in your area of study?
12. What have you found to be the toughest aspect of discipline?
13. Describe the physical appearance of your classroom.
14. Describe an ideal curriculum in your area of study.
16. How do you implement career education concepts in your classes?

TABLE 6 (CONT.)
(FERGUSON, 1983)

17. How do you individualize learning in your classes?
18. Define current curriculum trends in your area.
19. How much time do you devote to the lecture approach?
20. Describe independent study projects your students have completed.
21. If you could choose to teach any concept in your area, which would you select? Why?
22. What rules have you established for your classroom?
23. How have you implemented inquiry?
24. Of what use are behavioral learning objectives in the teaching/learning process?
25. How do you structure your class to achieve maximum benefit from teacher/student contact?
26. Describe the format you use to develop a lesson.
27. What should schools do for students?
28. Is the teaching of content important? Why/why not?
29. How have you emphasized the development of basic skills?
30. How do you handle the different ability levels of students in classes?
31. How do you account for the affective domain in your teaching?
32. How would your students describe you?
33. In what professional organizations do you hold membership?
34. How would your colleagues describe you?
35. Why did you choose the teaching profession?
36. How have you recently improved your professional skills?
37. What are your plans for future improvement of professional skills?
38. What is the toughest aspect of teaching today?
39. What is the role of homework?
40. What has been your most positive teaching experience? Negative?
41. How have you contributed toward the development of the total school program in your current position?
42. What activities will you sponsor if you are hired for this position?
43. Could a student of low academic ability receive a high grade in your classes?
44. What is your system for evaluating student work?
45. What would be the ideal philosophy of a school for you?
46. What is your philosophy of education?
47. Why is your field important for a student to study?
48. How would you handle a student who is a consistent behavioral problem in your class?
49. How would your last principal describe you?
50. What five words would you use to describe yourself?
51. What is your position on teacher-advisement programs? Behavior modification? Tracking? Special education? Values clarification? Multi-test approach?
52. If you found nonstandard usage in student writing or class discussion, how would you respond to it?
53. In what areas do you feel you need improvement?
54. How would you handle a student sleeping in your class?
55. What would you do if a student has been absent from your class for several days?
56. What provisions have you made for the gifted?
57. What would a visitor in your class see?
58. How have you communicated student progress to parents?
59. What are your recreational activities, hobbies, interests?
60. How have you stressed the development of cognitive skills within your classes?
61. Define a superior teacher.

TABLE 6 (CONT.)
(FERGUSON, 1983)

62. What is your opinion of holding students after school for detention?
63. Do you like laughter in your classroom?
64. What units would you include in teaching (*name of course*)?
65. How do you assist in preventing the destruction of school property in your classroom?
66. What is the role of the student within your classroom?
67. Describe an assignment that you recently gave to your students.
68. Cite the criteria you would use to evaluate a textbook for possible adoption?
69. What field trips have you arranged for your classes during this past year?
70. Have you supervised student teachers, interns, or practicum students? Why/why not?
71. Should sex education be included in the curriculum? Why/why not?
72. Are you well organized?
73. Describe a lesson plan that you have developed? What were the objectives, the format of the lesson, and how did you evaluate whether or not the objectives were achieved?
74. A student tells you he/she has been experimenting with marijuana. What would you do?
75. Should schools practice corporal punishment? Why/why not?
76. Give an example of directions you have given for class or homework.
77. What are your practices in dealing with controversial subjects?
78. How have your classes made use of the library during the last nine weeks?
79. What should your students have gained from having taken your course?
80. What are your strong points?
81. What curricular materials have you developed?
82. How would you change the public schools if you could make any changes you wished?
83. What is your position on competency-based instruction?
84. What do you like most about being a teacher?
85. Which aspects of teaching do you like least?
86. Do you like to have people like you?
87. What time management principles do you follow?
88. How do you cope with stress?
89. What motivates you?
90. Why do want to leave your present position?
91. How have you involved parents in the learning process?
92. Describe your last workday.
93. If you could, what would you change about your present position?
94. Name the titles of the last three books that you have read.
95. How many days of work have you missed in the last three years?
96. What two or three books, concepts, or experiences have influenced you the most in your professional development?
97. Can a school be too student-oriented? Explain.
98. Why should you be hired?
99. What questions have I not asked that you wished I would have raised?
100. If you are selected for this position what can we do to help you be successful?

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Based upon all available current research and case studies, I recommend the following procedures in hiring excellent teachers for any school. These procedures will not only identify excellent teachers, but they will help maintain objectivity and consistency in the selection process of one teacher candidate over another. This selection process will also enhance faculty collegiality and assist with making the new faculty member(s) feel less alienated during his/her first year of teaching.

1. Teachers and administrators must assess the needs of the school and department to define which teacher candidate can best be of service to the school. This will also focus attention to the types of questions asked of teacher candidates during all interviews.
2. Since the interview by itself has relatively low reliability, it should be only one of many factors that go into the hiring process. The resume, interview, the mini-teaching lesson (20-3- minutes), and any teacher qualifying tests (NTE, WPCT, or Teacher Perceiver Inventory) should all be weighted in making final selections.
3. All interviews should be structured with consistent questions being asked all candidates.
4. The interviews should use the "funnel sequence" using open-ended questions at first to allow teacher applicants maximum talking time. Questions should also be descriptive in nature to enable candidates to reveal what they have actually done in practice, not just in theory.
5. All answers to questions should be rated on a consistent scale that is weighted according to the individual needs of the school.

6. The interview should be conducted by a panel (3 or more), not by just one individual. This will eliminate potential bias and ensure that all needs of the school are represented. This will also assist with the collegial spirit among faculty and the acceptance of new faculty members into the school.
7. Immediately after the interview, the teacher candidate should teach a mini-course (20-30 minutes) which will be rated by the interviewing panel on a rating scale. The mini-course rating will be one of many scores to be considered in the selection of the teacher candidate.
8. Schedule times for teacher candidates to visit classes, students, faculty, and the administration. Ensure that faculty scheduled to meet candidates possess excellent interpersonal skills, professional skills, and knowledge of the school in order to best represent the school in attracting the best teacher candidates for the job.

As researchers concluded, even the best interviews and even the best decision-making processes can be subject to errors. The information acquired about a candidate, for example, can be misleading, incomplete, or even completely wrong. Moreover,interviewers receiving the same information can differ in their judgements significantly. While many industrial and organizational psychologists are well aware of the findings concerning the limited reliability and validity of the interview, few would ever advocate eliminating the interview in the selection process. But through the use of common goals and objective criteria applied consistently to all candidates, we can make the personnel selection process closer to an art or science than what it is now--a trial and error process that can take its toll on the students, faculty, and school.

The Teacher You Are Looking For

James Ferguson, executive director of curriculum for the Iowa City (Iowa) School District, looks for a teacher who is:

A giver versus taker
Goal-oriented versus task
Enthusiastic versus bored
People-oriented versus paper
Articulate versus inarticulate
Knowledgeable versus void of content
Intrinsically motivated versus extrinsically
Operates from instructional framework versus "wings" it
Kid-centered versus teacher-oriented
Career-oriented versus job-holder
Empathetic versus insensitive
Competent versus incompetent
Caring versus indifferent
Flexible versus rigid
Possessing verve
Versus bland.

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